THE VOLUNTEER ORGANIST.

BY S. W. FOSS.

The gret big church wuz crowded full uv broad-cloth an' uv silk,
An' satins rich as cream that grows on ol' brindle's milk;
Shined boots, biled shirts, stiff dickeys an' stove-pipe hats were there,
An' doods 'ith trouserl oons so tight they couldn' kneel down in prayer.

The elder in his poolpit high, said, as he slowly riz:
"Our organist is kep' to hum, laid up 'ith roomatiz,
An' as we hev no substitoot, as brother Moore ain't here,
Will some 'un in the congregation be so kind's to volunteer?"

An' then a red nosed, druken tramp, of low-toned, rowdy style,
Give an' interjuctory hiccup, an' then staggered up the aisle.
Then thro' thet holy atmosphere there crep' a sense er sin,
An' thro' thet air of sanctity the odor uv ol' gin.

Then Deacon Purington he yelled, his teeth all set on edge:
"This man purfanes the house er God! W'y this is sacrilege!"
The tramp didn' hear a word he said, but slouched 'ith stumblin' feet,
An' sprawled an' staggered up the steps, an' gained the organ seat.

He then went pawrin' thro' the keys, an' soon there rose a strain,
Thet seemed to jes' bulge out the heart, an' lectrify the brain;
An' then he slapped down on the thing 'ith hands an' head an' knees,
He slam-dashed his hull body down kerflop upon the keys.

The organ roared, the music flood went sweepin' high an' dry,
It swelled into the rafters, an' bulged out into the sky,
The ol' church shook an' staggered, an' seemed to reel an' sway,
An' the elder shouted "Glory!" an' I yelled out "Hoorny!"

An' then he tried a tender strain that melted in our ears,
Thet brought up blessed memories and drenched 'em down 'ith tears;
An' we dreamed uv ol'-time kitchens, 'ith Tabby on the mat,
Uv home an' luv an' baby-days, an' mother, an' a I that!

An' then he struck a streak uv hope—a song from souls forgiven—
Thet burst from prison-bars uv sin, an' stormed the gates uv Heaven:
The mornin' stars they sung together,—no soul was left alone,—
We felt the universe wuz safe, an' God wuz on his throne!

An' then a wail uv deep despair an' darkness come agin,
An' along, black crape hung on the doors uv all the homes uv men;
No luv no light, no joy, no hope, no songs of glad delight,
An' then—the tramp, he staggered down an' reeled into the night!

But we knew he'd tol' his story, tho' he never spoke a word,
An' it wuz the saddest story thet our ears had ever heard;
He hed tol' his own life history, an' no eye was dry thet day,
W'en the elder rose an' simply said:" "My brethren, let us pray."

—*Yankee Blade.*

ROYAL'S RESCUE.

BY FLORENCE WELDON.

Royal Hanover stood by the window playing with the scarlet curtain-tassel, and Dr. Reynolds sat in an easy-chair beside the fire, covertly looking at her. In varied travels he had seen few women as beautiful. The round supple form, the regularly carved and exquisitely tinted face, the perfect grace and air of high-breeding, might have pleased a more fastidious man than he. But something higher and better than admiration softened Dr. Reynold's face as he turned away with a soft sigh and rustled the leaves of his book by the fire-light. Royal deserted the window and came softly toward the fire.

"A year from to-day, I hope I shall not be here," she said.

Again Dr. Reynolds looked up at her. His gaze was a mixture of tenderness and sorrow.

"Do you hope to be happier, Royal?" he said.

"Yes, I hope to be," she answered, knotting the silken cords of her wrapper, in turn, with those restless fingers of hers.

Again Dr. Reynolds sighed.

"If you have anything to say to me, why don't you say it?" she exclaimed, impatiently.

"You know my wish," he said, quietly.

A sudden color flickered in her cheek. She glanced at him shyly, from under her long lashes.

"I would regret no money that would keep you off the stage, Royal."

The color died in her beautiful face.

"You would pay any price to keep me here in *ennui*," she exclaimed. "Why, I shall eat my own heart in a year more of this life!"

His sorrowful eyes seemed unbearable to her.

"It's so tame and spiritless!" said she; "so worse than a thousand cares, with its inanity! I, a woman, loathe it! How you, a man, can endure it, I cannot see."

"I am tired," he answered, simply.

She paused in her walk. Standing near him, and looking down on his bowed head, she saw, very plainly, the streaks of gray in it. The fire died out of her face.

"I am so young!" she said, more gently.

"Yes," he answered.

"Only 20."

"Only 20," he repeated.

She went back to the window and stood there in silence.

The landscape was gray and wintry, patches of snow on the frozen ground, and the trees creaking and rushing in the wind—the great elms and oaks of Woodmore. The warm, quiet room was quite still. The coals burned without a crackle, her canary had gone to sleep in the dusk, and Dr. Reynolds was mute and motionless in his place.

Her impatient thoughts roved away to the city. She saw, in fancy, lights, and glowing colors, and living walls of people. Music gave voice to the scene. Then her soul seemed to steal out of her body, and she stood before the admiring throng, all the slumbering fire and romance of her nature vitalizing and bringing to life some character of olden story that had thrilled her in childhood and was still famous in the memory of men. How the grand words of passion and inspiration rung from her lips!—how complete her success—how enthusiastic the plaudits of the throng!

She started suddenly and waked as from a dream as a servant brought in lights and the evening's mail. No letters for her; no one ever thought of or cared for her now; but next year——

Dr. Reynolds read his letters in silence and then took up the evening paper. She glanced around; the quiet, exotic atmosphere was as[illegible] She turned to leave the room. Dr. Reynolds looked up.

"Are you going to your room, Royal?"

"Yes. Good-night!"

"I wish to warn you not to go outside the garden to-morrow, or on any day until the danger of going around is removed. A tiger has escaped from the traveling menagerie now in the village, and, so far, has been hunted without success. He is probably in the woods not far off. Good night," and he turned to his paper again.

Long after Royal was soundly sleeping he kept sorrowful vigils.

Royal awoke from troubled dreams with a headache. She lifted herself higher on her pillow and saw a sheet of sunshine on the wall. She closed her eyes upon it with a moan of pain.

But gradually the pain abated, though she rose languidly at 9 o'clock and commenced making her toilet.

But when the soft crimson wrapper was donned, the glittering buttons in the snowy cuffs, and the dark hair put in a loose shining coil, suddenly off came the cashmere wrapper, and down came the loose shining coil of hair—to be replaced by an out-of-door dress and snugger braids, surmounted by a little Polish cap of fur.

"I must walk myself into a better state of health; I can't stand it to be so stupid," said Royal

She slammed the hall-door behind her and went down the avenue. She walked a mile down the road and then turned into the woods, attracted by some brilliant sprays of bittersweet.

She had gathered a handful, and, unconscious how their orange and scarlet set off her dark, brilliant face, was turning away, when a crackling in the bushes behind her made her glance back. A large, strange, tawny animal was gliding toward her. Her guardian's forgotten warning flashed over her.

"My God! the tiger!" she murmured, in freezing horror, below her breath.

Seeing himself observed, the animal paused. With terrified eyes she saw him preparing for a spring. Ghastly pale, one wild frenzied scream of horror burst from her. At the same moment there came a shock, and she was senseless.

The next she knew was hearing her name pronounced in tender accents of compassion and love. She lay upon the ground, her head pillowed upon her guardian's breast, and the smoke of a rifle still hung in the air. She raised herself without speaking, and saw the great gory brute stretched dead at her feet.

"Did you kill him?" she asked, bewildered.

"Yes; just in the act of leaping upon you, Royal," he answered. "The creature was savage with hunger."

For the first time since she was a child he saw her burst into tears.

"Don't cry," he said, quietly; "the danger is past now," and he took her home.

Somehow the crimson library, with its glowing grate, was something better than it had been the night before. But the gray streaks in Dr. Reynold's hair showed quite as plainly by day as by twilight, as he seated himself in the chair again, with no word of reproof for the danger she had led them both into.

Suddenly he felt two clinging arms about his neck, and a graceful form, with shining hair and dashing tears, sank on its knees beside him.

"I am not going away; I am not going to leave you," cried Royal, sobbing.

Trembling, he snatched her to his breast.

"Darling," he said, "but I cannot keep you always."

"As long as you will," she said.

"Royal, I must tell you," he said. "I do not love you as a ward only."

"Then I will be your wife," she whispered.

"And keep your beauty only to bless an old man, Royal?"

"I shall be happy," was her answer, playing with the gray streaked hair. "My heart is not empty any longer. Oh, why could you not see?" she exclaimed, hiding her face in his neck.

And so crowds never saw Royal Hanover personate Cordelia and Peditta, and footlights never flared upon the perishing of her bloom. As "an old man's darling," she is more beautiful to-day than ever before.

Only a Sad Accident.

Western judge—You are charged, sir, with being the leader of a party which hunted down and lynched a horse thief. The days have gone by when citizens of this great commonwealth can thus take the law into their own hands! hence your arrest. What have you to say?

Prominent citizen—I ain't guilty, jedge. I'll tell you how it was. We caught the feller, and tied his hands and feet. Nothing wrong about that, was there, jedge?

"No, that was no doubt necessary."

"Wall, jedge, there was a storm comin' up and we couldn't spare him an umbrella very well, so we stood him under a tree. That was all right, wasn't it?"

"Certainly."

"Wall, the clouds kept gatherin' an' the wind was purty high, an' we didn't want him blown away, so we tied a rope around his neck and fastened the other end to a limb above—not tight, jedge, jest so as to hold him—and we left him standin' solid on his feet. Nothin' wrong about that, was there?"

"Nothing at all."

"Then I kin be excused, can't I?"

"But the man was found suspended from that tree and stone dead the next morning."

"None of us had anything to do with that, jedge. You see we left him standin' there in good health and spirits, for we give him all he could drink when we said 'good-by;' but you see during the night the rain come up an' I s'pose the rope got purty wet and shrunk a couple o' feet. That's how the sad accident happened, jedge."—*New York Weekly.*

KENTUCKY applicant to St. Peter—Just let me in long enough to get a shot at Stokes' grandson. There's a feud between our families.—*Binghampton Republican.*

AN Allentown, Pa., tailor has protected a "shoulder protector," to prevent the powder on the girls' faces from soiling the young men's coats.

The Country Newspaper.

There is therefore a place and an opportunity not to be despised for the country newspaper worker, and with this, as with every large opportunity, a serious obligation to careful, thorough, honest work. It is not too much to say there is no better field for an intelligent, well-equipped man of large sympathies and vigorous personality than the editorial chair of a country newspaper, nor is there a position which places upon a man greater duties to the community in which he lives. The editors of the great metropolitan newspapers rest on the heights of impersonal journalism, flinging their thunderbolts with a freedom born of almost entire personal irresponsibility, and while the thunderbolts are in great part shattered on the rocks below, the country editor walks with the multitude in the valley, gives the weight of his personality to the impersonal words of his paper, which come to the people like the warm handclasp of a friend, measures his words in accordance with the peculiarities of his constituents and influences the thought and feeling of hundreds where the thunderbolt of the unapproachable Jove strikes one. It was a successful country editor in a thriving Massachusetts town who once sagely remarked that, if he were a candidate for office, and must take his choice between the combined support of the metropolitan dailies and that of the country press, he would choose the latter, and accept with equanimity the hostility of his city brethren. Every country editor knows that he was right. The great dailies, so-called, are received in the abstract as venders of the world's news. Their resources in this direction are great and cannot in the nature of things be rivaled by those at the command of country papers of limited circulation. But the country paper comes closer to the hearts of the people at large, it is more thoroughly read, and it has an influence the greater because it is one of the subtle, unrealized, every-day forces of life. It is held rigidly to account for the honesty and fairness of its utterances. It cannot palm off upon its readers what are known in the slang of the newspaper fraternity as "fakes;" it must be reliable first of all. Neither can it violate moral decency to any marked extent and prosper, as can its neighbors in the great cities. In most communities, in New England at least, its constituency is largely found in the churches, and will not tolerate vulgarity. The country newspaper stands to dwellers outside the large cities in the place of a friend and regular home visitor, and it is essential above all things that it maintain the good character and good breeding that are required of other friends, if it would keep warm its welcome in the home circle.—*Edwin A. Start, in New England Magazine.*

Sweet Ghosts.

One house was closed for three years while we were in Europe; and soon after our return, last June, we began to hear mysterious noises. The house was hip-roofed, and the chambers were low, with sloping ceilings. It was in the chambers that we heard the noises.

The sounds varied. Sometimes we heard a low, heavy rumbling like distant thunder; at other times we heard, or seemed to hear, broken murmurs, like hoarse voices in conversation; but usually the noise suggested distant whispering and groanings.

We are not superstitious, but it was not pleasant to have such things going on in the house. For four weeks we sought vainly for an explanation of the mystery. Rats and mice never made such noises, nor bats nor birds. So far as we could think, nothing that flies, nothing that runs, could produce such sounds as came from our haunted chambers.

We had many curious visitors, but pretty soon some of our more ignorant neighbors began to shun the house. The whole affair was greatly exaggerated, of course, and disagreeable rumors were speedily noised about.

This had been going on for about four weeks when father came into the house one morning in a state of evident excitement.

"Well, I've solved the mistery!" he exclaimed. "It's bees!"

"Bees!" we cried; "what do you mean?"

"I've seen a thousand bees, at least, going out and in at that small hole in the gable roof," he said. "They've swarmed there, and that explains the whole thing."

We laughed at the idea; but father called a carpenter and had the small hole enlarged. The inside of the roof was found to be one immense bee-hive. Over fifty pounds of delicious honey were taken out, and with the removal of the bees the mysterious sounds came to an end.

A Western Bunco Game.

Real Estate Agent (Dugout City, Kan.)—Stranger just arriving in town from the East. Rush around to the hotel, greet him as a long-lost brother or something and when he explains that there is some mistake, cover your confusion by inviting him to drink.

New Man—Maybe he won't accept it.

"Oh, yes, he'll accept, to relieve your embarassment. They always do."

"Yes, sir. What next?"

"Keep him in conversation until I come round and ask to speak with you on business. Then introduce me, and we'll have another drink. That'll settle it. Two drinks of Dugout City whisky will make any man feel rich enough to buy the hull earth."—*New York Weekly.*

Only Looking for Accommodations.

As the steamboat from New London was about to leave for New York the other evening, a young man leading a blushing and buxom damsel by the hand, approached the polite clerk and said in a low and confident tone:

"Mister, me and my wife have jest got married and are looking for accommodations."

"Looking for a berth, I suppose," said the clerk, as he passed tickets to others who were waiting.

"A berth! Thunder and lightning, no!" gasped the astonished youth. "We haven't but jest got married. We only want a place to stay all night, you know, that's all."

WISE AND UNWISE.

SHEET music—Snoring.

A GRATE fire warms up when it's coaled.

GUBBINS insists that corns are like an acrobat, because they always light on his feet.

A LADY, visiting a hospital, gave a soldier who had lost both legs a tract on the sin of dancing.

A POLICEMAN on a market beat can not complain of his hard lot. He has the best the market affords.

DENTISTS ought to make good campaign orators; they having such an effective way of taking the stump.

AN editor puffing air-tight coffins said: "No person having once tried one of these coffins will ever use any other."

BROWN—So you eloped with Jones' daughter, did you? Green—I did. B.—Didn't Jones kick. G.—No, he lost a leg in the war.

AN experienced young man says it takes only one letter to tell the difference between the summer and winter styles of courtship, viz, gate—grate.

"WON at last!" he exclaimed, triumphantly. "Yes, Charlie," said she shyly, "but only on the strict condition, you know, that I am to be the one."

EXPERT EVIDENCE.

You may patch, you may tinker
Old jokes as you will,
But the flavor of chestnuts
Will cling round them still.

"YOU have never taken me to the cemetery," said a married woman to her husband. "No, my dear," replied he; "that is a pleasure I have yet in anticipation."

MRS. MATER—I wonder what makes the dog so afraid of me? He always acts as if I was going to half kill him. Little Daughter—I dess he's seen you 'panking me.

FERMENT means to work, said the teacher to the language class. Now each of you write a sentence containing the word. This is what Tommy Cumso, who reads the paper, wrote, "Tramps do not like to ferment."

LADY (leaving store)—You bet I am up to the tricks of these merchants. I made him come down two dollars on the price. Merchant (to himself)—I am up to the tricks of these lady customers. I put the price up four dollars.

SATISFIED OLD MAID (fishing for a compliment)—Tell me, darling, why you prefer me to any of the other girls for a bride? Sensible Old Bach—On my wedding tour I don't want people to think that I am a newly married man.

MRS. BEACON HILL (in an icy whisper)—I beg your pardon, but this is my pew! The Intruder (gently reproachful)—I am a sister in Christ, and this is my Father's house! "Er—doubtless. But I have to pay the rent, you know."

FLAP—I'm in love, and the only disagreeable thing about it is that the girl is older than I. Jack—How old are you now? "I'm 18." "And the lady what?" "Twenty-two." "Make your mind easy, my boy. By the time you are 21 she'll be only 20."

A BROOKLYN boy asked his father the other day what was a philosopher. "A philosopher, my son? Why a philosopher is a man who reasons." "Is that so?" said the boy, dejectedly, "I thought it was a man who didn't let things bother him." The father silently patted his son's head.

GOT the Best of Grandma.—Little Dot—Grandma, can God see me when I am naughty? Grandma—Yes, dear. Little Dot—Can He see me everywhere? Grandma—Yes, God can see you at all times. Little Dot—Can He see me down in papa's wine cellar? Grandma—Yes. Little Dot—Come off, grandma, my papa ain't got any wine cellar.—*Life.*

NEW YORK HOTEL CLERK (to bell boy)—See what the rumpus is in 621. Bell Boy (returning)—Col. Bluegrass is mad because there's a pitcher of water in his room. Clerk—But that's not to drink. That's to wash in. Bell Boy—That's what I told him, and he got madder still. He wanted to know if they thought him a heathen. He said he washed before he started from home.

A YOUNG lady asked an editor this extraordinary question: "Do you think it right for a girl to sit on a young man's lap, even if she is engaged?" Whereupon the editor told this extraordinary lie: "We have had no experience in the matter referred to." Why didn't he say: "If it was our girl and our lap, yes; if it was another girl and our lap, yes; but if it was our girl and another fellow's lap, never! never! never!"

Irish Blunders.

An Irishman, testifying in a police court, was asked to explain why he had "shown the white feather" on a certain occasion. "Tis better to be a coward for five minutes than dead all your life," he replied. Another Irishman, while accompanying a fishing party, had a hard fall down a steep mountain slope. Picking himself up, he devoutly exclaimed, "Glory be to God that I wasn't walking back over the mountain a dead man!" An Irish woman observing that her bed curtains had caught fire, hurried away to fetch water. She caught up a can of water, and as she was about to pour it upon the flames remembered that it was hot water, and mentally decided that it could be of no use. An Irish schoolboy placed a cup full of coffee on a sloping desk. Finding that it overflowed, he sought to remedy his difficulty by turning the cup around. An Irish tenant, wishing to raise the roof of his cabin, began by excavating the floor. An Irishman, on a gentleman saying to him, "How did you like that whisky, Pat?" at once replied, "Sure, your honor, it has made another man of me, and that other man would like a glass, too." A temperance lecture might make that bull do good service in illustrating the fact "that the first glass does the mischief."

A Miracle Explained.

Mrs. D.—My husband fell down the cellar stairs with five bottles of wine and didn't break a single one of them.

Visitor—Wonderful! Miraculous!

"Well, no; it's not so wonderful after all. The five bottles of wine were on the inside. He drank them before he fell down the stairs."